

Cincinnati Theosophical Society

330½ RACE STREET.

The Secret Doctrine

—OF THE—

Ancient Mysteries.

THE
SECRET DOCTRINE
OF THE
ANCIENT MYSTERIES.

AN ESSAY

BY

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PREFACE.

The following essay was originally prepared and read in fulfillment of an obligation involved by membership in the Cincinnati Literary Club. It antedates by a year the essay on The Nature and Aim of Theosophy, and naturally leads up to it.

Those who are familiar with the history, and have kept pace with the progress of the Theosophical Society, are already aware that the author of *Isis Unveiled* has been for some time engaged in the preparation of a new edition of that famous work. The new edition is to bear also a new title, viz., *The Secret Doctrine*. The appearance of this work has been long delayed by the serious illness of Madam Blavatsky, but recent^a advices show her to be marvelously improved, and hard at work on the new edition, which is to be altered and improved by important additions. If the present essay, which attempts only a bare outline of the subject, shall excite inquiry, and lead to further investigation, the most sanguine expectations of its author will have been fully satisfied.

In spite of opposition, ridicule, and misrepresentation, this new

movement for the revival of the Ancient Wisdom Religion, has spread far and wide, and taken deep root. The fifth edition of *Isis Unveiled* has been for some time exhausted, so that it is difficult to procure a copy at any price, and though the immense amount of matter which it contained was badly arranged, yet the book will long be famous as a cyclopædia of occultism after its much-abused author has passed from human ken. What this loyal heart has borne, and the noble purpose that has inspired her life, only they know who are in full accord with her work, and who comprehend its nature and aim, for she has learned "to know, to will, to do, and to keep silent," even in the face of calumny.



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ANCIENT MYSTERIES.

WE are apt to boast of this as the Age of Science, and yet we do not all agree as to what constitutes the province, defines the bounds, or determines the nature of science. The province of science is the whole of the phenomena of nature, all that appears and disappears, all changes and motions of matter, together with the cause and effect of motion in matter; in short, all visible, movable, tangible nature is the province of science. The bounds of science are therefore the bounds of nature. The methods of science are analysis, observation, and experiment. Science separates, classifies, weighs and measures: science therefore demands diligence, patience, order, and above all, exactness.

The goal of science is knowledge through demonstration. Now, it may seem unnecessary to observe that if we take all

that science has yet achieved, all that has been demonstrated, and all that is therefore in the scientific sense actually known, there remains a vast domain for the unknown, the undemonstrated, and yet very many who call themselves scientists trip in their logic, and they reason, talk and act as though all were known.

Science is materialistic, in the sense that it investigates matter and the laws of motion, and this materialism becomes pernicious when it ignores or denies the unknown world beyond its present achievements. The science of the day despises credulity, yet it is guilty of incredulity, and practically it denies all that it does not know, and proceeds on the hypothesis that nothing exists that is not cognizable to the senses, that nothing exists that cannot be weighed, measured, seen and handled, thus stultifying itself by resting on a basis that is far from demonstration.

True science has nothing to do with credulity or incredulity; it simply divides the phenomenal universe into the demonstrated and the to-be-demonstrated; the known and the unknown; and he who accepts without evidence is just as scientific as he who denies without examination. The discoveries of science for the past two or three decades alone are sufficient to teach the thoughtful student of nature the folly of incredulity, as the folly of past beliefs and hypotheses show the absurdity of credulity.

The true scientist, therefore, is certain as to all matters

fully demonstrated, while as to all else he holds his mind simply in abeyance, ready to accept truth from whatever source.

If you tell the average scientist of certain unusual phenomena which he cannot classify under known laws of matter, he is not only incredulous, not only flatly denies them, and assumes trickery or lying, but when he, with a flourish of trumpets, and clothed in buckram of the most approved scientific pattern, sallies forth to *investigate*, his sole endeavor is to unearth the fraud, and if he fail to discover it, he still assumes that it is there, because the islands which have risen from the great expanse of boundless nature are not laid down on his chart. Those who go fraud-hunting bring home plenty of conceit and vainglory in their game-bags, but seldom a feather of truth. Man arrives at real knowledge through two processes, of which science is one. The co-worker with science is philosophy, and if the province and true methods of science have been misconceived, still more has philosophy been misinterpreted.

We have heard so much of late years of speculative philosophy that it is quite generally conceived that philosophy consists of speculation only, and it is quite the fashion to scout and ridicule it, while materialistic science borrows just enough of the habiliments of philosophy to cover the rents in its own garments, and then boasts of its own sufficiency for any emergency. Our nomenclature, unfortunately, contains the word supernatural, and science having determined the gross-

ness of the natural, claims the final convertibility of the so-called supernatural into the same terms of matter. All nature is dual, and let us say as designating this duality the natural and the spiritual. True, these are only words, but if we can locate back of these words logical ideas, and find that systematic investigation is thereby greatly facilitated, we shall have gained largely by the process. But science cries, "Halt! we deny spirit; show us a spirit, and we shall show you a fraud. How much does spirit weigh? What are its component parts, its combining numbers? What is its affinity for oxygen and carbon?"

What, then, is *thy* basis, O science? What is matter? what is force? and how about your hypothetical atoms? What know you of matter, of force? What know you of visible, movable, tangible nature, except a few names for phenomena? What know you, O scientist! after all, that is real, exact, positive, unchangeable? What know you of the *real essence* of any thing?

When we come to nature as embodied in man, what a mystery! Whence came he? What is he? Whither goes he? Has the scalpel revealed the fountain of life, the springs of motion, the essence of will, the mathematics of consciousness, the laws of the understanding?

How is it that one man is knocked down by a sledge-hammer, his skull fractured, portions of the brain removed, an iron bar driven through his brain, his limbs blown away, and

yet he survives as a conscious, living, understanding soul, while another dies in the horrors of lockjaw from the prick of a pin, or goes insane from the shock of grief, or even of some imagined calamity? How much does such a cause weigh? how does the scientist state it in terms of matter or equivalents of force, beyond words, which make confusion more confounding?

Man lives at once in two worlds, the natural and the spiritual. The natural is objective, the spiritual subjective. The process of the natural or objective is phenomenal; the process of the spiritual, or subjective, is noumenal. Science deals with the objective and investigates nature; philosophy deals with the subjective and investigates spirit. Science works by analysis; philosophy works by synthesis. These two work together, never contradict each other, and by induction and deduction arrive at a knowledge of the truth. Much that goes by the name of science is false; much that is called philosophy is vapid nonsense, while true philosophy and true science are the processes by which man may read the universe, and finally comprehend his own nature. Bacon predicted this result through induction, others have looked for it through deduction; if it ever comes, it will be through both processes combined and comprehended.

Man is a religious being: he who is cultivated at all points, and is capable of forming high ideals, worships and adores; he who is ignorant, sensual, brutish, fears and trembles.

“The ignorant obey the law, through fear; the wise keep the law, through knowledge.”

To the ignorant belongs superstition,
To the wise, religion.

The popular belief in a given religion is founded on mystery. The ignorant worship only what they cannot understand; as soon as the riddle is solved the mystery disappears, and the idol is broken. Socrates explained the riddle, was accused of corrupting the young, and drank the cup of poison.

Partial or illogical explanations contradict the established laws of nature and lead to skepticism, and finally to denial, irreligion, and materialism. What was formerly accepted without proof is now boldly denied without reason. The ignorant and superstitious evil-doer trembles at the Moloch which his depraved imagination has endowed with form and clothed with substance.

“His nostrils breathe out living flames,
He’s a consuming fire,
His jealous eyes his wrath inflames
To raise his vengeance higher.”

Religion is as natural to man as the air he breathes, mephitic in the valleys of superstition and fear, vitalizing and pure on the “mountain heights where dwells repose.”

Tradition and mythology are interwoven in the forms of all religions, and assume to explain their origin and mystery. Mythology individualizes the powers of nature, and pict-

ures in fables the passions of men. The gods of mythology represent in the aggregate the divinity of all religions. The outer forms of myth, fable, parable, and allegory, are but the habiliments of an underlying mystery. Through many forms may be traced one idea. The clothing is fantastic or fashionable, classically scanty, or prudishly severe, according to age, climate, or nationality; but seldom is seen the naked truth. The mystery is veiled, whether of Isis, or whether Bacchic, Eleusinian, Cabbalic, Masonic, or Pyramidic. Many have imagined they could lift the veil; many have tried to reveal the mystery. Talmudic tradition tells of three who sought to enter paradise; one saw, and straightway died; another became insane; and only the last of the three "brought away scions." Only he, who has discovered a rent in the veil, can imagine the profound meaning of the above legend.

The outer forms of all religions differ so widely, that no one can devote himself at once to all. The fast and feast days would conflict, the genuflections be adverse, and he would become lost in the labyrinth, hopelessly bewildered. But if he shall have discovered that the core of all religions is the same, that in spite of outward diversity, and apparent conflict, one inward essence only appears, and if in the outward observance he feels and knows the inner truth, it will matter to him very little whether he worships at Mecca, Babylon, Rome, or Jerusalem, whether in temples made with hands, or in God's first temples beneath the stars, and amid the

smiling verdure of bounteous nature. He is the temple not made with hands, if he has banished the tables of the money-changers, for The Lord is in his holy temple, and the whole earth is silent before him !

In all the world's great religions there were two interpretations. One was given to the people regarding outward observance, confession of faith, and penalties for disobedience, with a Thus sayeth the Lord. The other interpretation was known only to the priest, who belonged to a certain family or tribe, and was devoted from infancy to his high calling, and educated in the "mystery of the law." But the higher mystery was never imparted, it must be sought. The years of penance and pilgrimage, fasting and prayer, were rigidly enforced and conscientiously observed ; for the temple had to be purified before the high ideals could be realized. He who was satisfied with the traditional letter of the law, never reached higher ; and so many remained in the lower degrees, or without initiation. Neither was curiosity nor incredulity a passport to initiation. Only he who was devout without bigotry, vigilant, intelligent, loyal to the truth, quick to catch at hints, logical in conclusions, respectful to superiors, courteous to all, was observed by his superiors, willing to lead any who could follow, yet knowing how useless the attempt to persuade the foolish to be wise.

Tradition relates that when in this way the student in the schools of the Rabbins had so far initiated himself as to be

able to discern, and likely to comprehend the higher mystery, he was conducted by an aged Rabbi into the desert, where, alone, was revealed to him that which had become necessary to reconcile tradition and truth, and insure further advancement. In the Egyptian, Babylonian, Hindoo, and Christian mysteries, a similar system prevailed. In the school of Pythagoras, when the neophyte failed from any cause, he was returned to the outer world, and was given twice the value of worldly goods that he had brought to the community, and a stone was erected to his memory as though dead. To him who endured all in silence, and who knew all, was given a white stone, in which was a name written which no man could read save him who had received it. To know, to will, to dare, and to keep silent, was required of every initiate. In ancient times, initiation was no farce to be enacted on any chance comer. The junketing clubs and temples of mammon of the present day contain little of the ancient wisdom, except symbols, the true interpretation of which is lost, and signs, which are meaningless to him who cannot understand. There was in ancient times, a brotherhood that extended around the globe; and he who could explain the symbols was admitted to the feast.

This one underlying truth is represented in Greek fables, such as Cupid and Psyche, Proteus, and Ixion. But one fate overwhelmed the guardians of the secret wisdom, for the priesthood became corrupt. Only he who lived the life could know the doctrine, or knowing it could retain it. The mas-

ter's word was lost. The veil of the temple was rent in twain, only to reveal a grinning skeleton, from which all life had departed. One by one the lights in the temple were quenched. Greed of gain and lust for power on the one side, persecution and the burning of records on the other, had done their work, till the folly and ignorance of man imagined that the truth was destroyed. Israel mourned her decay, and her prophets cursed her corruption; and at the present day, those who still cling to books as sacred, and to the symbols as divine, in which the secret doctrine was once embodied, and through which it still shines, deny that it ever existed. The Jew ridicules his own Cabballah, and the Christian takes as literal the parables of his sacred books. Buddha, Zoroaster, Christ, and Mohammed, each retired into the wilderness to fast and pray, and each came forth to found a religion, to teach mankind, different races at different times, in parables, with signs and symbols, miracles and wonders, ONE EVERLASTING TRUTH, differently apprehended by their followers, but recognized as one by the secr. This secret wisdom exists to-day, *and cannot be destroyed*; its landmarks are of such a character, that the foolish, ignorant, and selfish, can never find it, and the wise having found can never lose it. The highest secrets of initiation were never committed to writing, but transmitted orally from hierophant to neophyte. Such records as existed were written in symbols and hieroglyphics, and these were kept in secret places known only to the priest. As these rec-

ords were from time to time discovered by the ignorant, and by them feared or hated as the works of the devil, they were destroyed. Involving, as they did, works of the highest science, such as astronomy, mathematics, architecture, and physiology, as the basis of exact knowledge, they were not likely to be understood or appreciated by the hordes of barbarians that again and again overrun the earth, blotting out many a fair picture of civilization. But the symbols remain, and fragments of ancient records, enough to enable one determined to know the truth, to win his way as of old, to the threshold of initiation, and, if the truth has not changed, neither have the conditions of its unfolding. The purpose of the present essay is to show that this truth exists, and to incite inquiry, as a barrier to stay the tide of materialism, that threatens to engulf, as in the blackness of oblivion, our present civilization, and that ministers only to despair and to the things that perish.

Nature is apparently diverse, destructive, contradictory, wrathful. God is One, unchangeable, beneficent. Jehovah says, I the Lord am One. Jesus says, I and my Father are One. Arjuna, in the Bhagavadgita, addresses the Holy One. This same idea is symbolized, not fantastically but naturally, and hence geometrically, as to form, and mathematically as to number, thus co-ordinating space and time by the circle. The similarity of the symbols of all religions has often been noted and commented upon, and their resemblance to those of

mythology is readily apparent. They may all be resolved into the primary form of the circle, with its central point and diameter line, emanations of the circle, however divided or combined, whether miter, crozier, crescent, or cross: while such symbols as the dove, raven, and such words as Joshua, Jehovah, Jesus, and Jonah, have a picture and word value, according to the numbers attached to the letters, as in Hebrew.

Out of the primary circle representing a sphere, arises by absolute geometry every form in nature; differing from all other forms, it nevertheless embodies them all potentially, and gives rise to them by emanation. Now, the circumference of a circle is not only a line equidistant at all points from a certain fixed point, the center, but dropping the idea of points altogether for that of continuity, oneness, and completeness, and we have the circumference of a circle defined as a line, that being prolonged in either direction *returns into itself*, and this definition conforms to the occult symbol of the serpent biting its tail, and has a direct relation to the fabled garden of Eden.

Now, every geometrician knows that a perfect circle with an exact center, is only an idea, and not to be realized actually. It can only be approximated. The science of symbols seizes the nascent point between the actual and ideal, and so pictures to the mind the divine idea. This must be constantly borne in mind, else the whole of these explanations will be deemed absurd and arbitrary, and it will be imagined

that any that fancy may suggest might be substituted in their place. It might be said that nature might crystalize a snow-flake from something else than a drop of water, but she never does; therefore there must be an inherent relation between the drop and the crystal, which it were wise to discover. But to proceed with the symbol. Following the process of construction already indicated, the first and simplest emanation from a circle, is a radius, a direct line from center to circumference. But as all of manifested nature is dual, positive and negative, male and female, light and darkness, thus duality and manifestation becoming synonymous with life, this emanation from the center occurs in opposite directions, and thus constitutes a diameter line. We have thus the primary relation of curved to straight lines, the division of the circle into degrees, thus co-ordinating space and time, the beginning of geometry, and representing the Sephira of Cabballah, as well as the sacred numbers of Pythagoras, $1 + 2 + 3 + 4 = 10$.

In thus unfolding the circle, we are not only following the method pursued in the ancient wisdom, as the basis of religion and mythology, but we are following as well the process pursued by nature in the unfolding of every snow-flake and crystal, every seed, leaf, flower, and fruit.

“For I reckon, through the ages
One increasing purpose runs,
And the thoughts of man are widened,
As the process of the suns.”

The germ from which the body of man is evolved, is at one time an oval mass of jelly, a germinal point in a mass of germinal matter, but hitherto formless and void like the new earth. Presently a developing membrane appears, and the primitive trace is an axis, or diameter line from center to periphery. As development goes on, we have, corresponding to this axis, the spinal cord, circulatory and digestive tracts.

Referring again to the symbol, if we cross the original diameter line with another perpendicularly, we shall include all possible angles within the circle, and connecting the four points of contact with the circumference by straight lines, we shall have a square. If we turn now to the sphere, our square becomes a cube; unfold this cube, the lines from the center representing surfaces, and we have a cross. In this symbol and in its unfolding, may be read the mystery of the Garden of Eden, as well as that of Gethsemane, the fall and the redemption of man.

I have touched upon but a single phase of Cabballah, and that in a single picture, by no means complete. The scriptures constituting the old and much of the new testament, are a series of such pictures, having their origin in visible nature, their basis in exact science and mathematics, and reaching in their philosophy the divinest truths ever revealed to man; and the two-foot rule of the Masons, with its basis of the British inch, involving also the ancient cubit value, together

with the square and compass, with the proper numbers of the measures, are the implements by which the outer walls may be scaled, and the inner truths revealed. The philosophy of emanation from the center of a circle, the beginning of mathematics and geometry, the relation of form to number, space to time, appears in the π value, or inherent relation of every circle to its own diameter line, and strangest of all, the shapes, measures, and relations of parts of the great pyramid on the banks of the Nile, fit exactly with this secret wisdom of the bible, as though one brain had planned, and one divine hand had executed both.

But the Cabbalah of the Jews, was but one of the embodiments of the secret wisdom, though here the traditions will never alone lead to revelation. Armed with the true symbols, and the key to their interpretation, the monuments of antiquity show a common ancestry and an intelligence not yet reached, nay, seldom dreamed of in this generation, for recognizing the spiritual, as well as the physical nature and needs of man; it is in the higher spiritual realm that we have most to learn, and they most to teach. For the ignorant and superstitious who tremble at their shadows, stand in awe of nature, or quake with terror at an angry, jealous God whom they have offended, there is ever the religion of belief and the bond of authority. For the wise and enlightened, there is the knowledge of the everlasting verities.

Bound to the wheel of Ixion, and involved in the fires of

passion, the fearful soul is whirled through the dread abyss. Chained to the rocks of Mt. Caucasus, Prometheus expiates his offense to the gods. He who could draw fire from heaven, was vanquished by Pandora's box. Many writers have attempted to recast these ancient fables, and to explain their meaning, who show their utter inability to comprehend them. This vein of ancient wisdom may be found in many places. Mr. Hitchcock showed this vein running through the Sonnets of Shakespeare, the writings of Swedenborg, Collin Clout, and the Red Book of Appin. The Logos of Plato and that of St. John refer to it openly, though this reference has been grossly misapprehended. These ancient writers never seem so mysterious, never so nonsensical as when reciting their riddles, that were purposely obscure; they were like the christian mystery, to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks, foolishness. One has only to glance at the works of the translators, editors, or commentators of ancient scriptures and mythologies, and those of Plato and the Neo-Platonists, to be convinced that these ancient writers, no less than the Sage of Greece were fools, or else, that knowing what they were about, they recited riddles for the edification of the wise, and the mystification of the foolish. Indeed, they often tell us so, in as many words: "To you it is given to know the mystery, but to them it is not given."

The translators of these ancient writers knowing nothing of the secret wisdom contained beneath the text, have failed

alike when attempting a literal rendering, or when indulging in poetic license. One may wander forever in the wrangles of philology without arriving at the truth, as the circumference of the circle may be divided to infinity, and enlarged to immensity, and at every point may spring a tangent into boundless space, comet-like, only to return by devious ways past finding out. Not so revolve the heavenly orbs.

The mind of man can never conquer nature in detail, for as one fact is discovered and explained, a new mystery bars the way. The diversities of outward manifestations are numberless as the sands of the sea, and we grope in darkness, gathering only a few pebbles on the shores of time, learning nothing of the boundless ocean of eternity, knowing nothing as it is, but only a few things, as they seem during a moment of transition.

If we seek in vain amid the diversity of outward nature for a key to the riddle, we may turn to nature in its aspect of unity, and learn wisdom. The environment, inheritance, habits, and phenomena of man are as diverse as the material nature in which he is involved. All the nations of the earth are not only made of one blood, but **ONE LIFE** pervades the universe. The germ involves, while growth evolves the primordial form. The life of plants and of animals is convertible into the life of man, and the life of man is re-converted to lower forms. The inherent terms of this equation make the maintenance of life possible through the basic function, nutrition.

All that we can say of individual forms is, that the one life of the universe qualifies at an infinite number of points. It is but the ebb and flow of the infinite ocean, renewal, rejuvenescence, with ever changing forms. This is again symbolized in the secret doctrine by the circle or the sphere. Diversity at the circumference, unity at the center. If each sphere has a single point as a center, from which all forms proceed, and if in inward essence the centers of all spheres agree as participating in the One Life which in man becomes conscious, this center may be unfolded and illuminated, and if the will be strengthened and the understanding enlightened, the archetypal man is revealed. This is the new birth; it is not a matter of sentiment or blind faith; it is a fact. "Ye must be born again."

The neophyte in the ancient mysteries underwent a long period of probationary training, in which the body was purified, the mind enlightened, the will strengthened. Both science and philosophy were brought into requisition, and when at last the seals were opened, as in the visions of St. John, the entranced neophyte needed no longer an interpreter, for the comforter had come, his own purified, re-born, liberated, and enlightened soul, and it led him unerringly to the truth. There is evidence that the Apostolic Catholic Church once possessed the secret doctrine, and some of its clergy have, no doubt, in every age apprehended the great truth. Hence, no doubt, originated its claim as the true interpreter of scripture,

and if the secret vaults of the Vatican could tell their buried story, the revelation would startle the world, Catholic and Protestant alike. But in the Christian church, as in all other organizations, the lines were sharply drawn between the wisdom for the priest and the command for the people. These lines were broken down, the doctrines became confused, unworthy candidates were admitted, and finally the secret lost, or guarded more jealously than ever by the few who had been able to retain it. The traditions of power and glory only remained. Time and again it was sought to reform the clergy and bring them back to the ancient land-marks and observances. The various sodalities and secret brotherhoods were an effort in this direction, where the vows of celibacy, chastity, and poverty conform to ancient requirements. But even here the spirit of rivalry and jealousy crept in, dreams of ambition, and worldly glory disturbed the nightly visions, till at length the attempt was made to seize supreme power in church or state, and the organization was suppressed. For centuries the readers, and more especially the writers, of mysterious books were persecuted and executed under the charge of dabbling in the black art, and of being in league with the devil, so that to this day the superstition remains, even with people otherwise intelligent.

Sometimes through knowledge, but more often through vague fear of danger, as men were found dealing with geometrical shapes, such as the five-pointed star, double tri-

angle, and the like, they were dragged to prison, only to emerge in their coffins, if indeed their bodies were not thrown unrecognized to the dogs. And why this fear of geometry? Because these symbols held the secret doctrine, and might lead to the interpretation of the mysteries of religion, and the more ignorant the inquisitor might be of these mysteries, the more cruel the persecution. But neither celibacy, chastity, nor poverty, when enforced by outward authority, ever led to arcane wisdom, but on the contrary, to the desolation of despair, insanity, and suicide, only to be followed by a reaction of unbridled licentiousness and moral corruption.

Read the history of the church in its efforts at reform, and of the condition of the clergy when the reaction came. An Italian Bishop of the tenth century, quoted by Lecky, epigrammatically describes the morals of his time, when he declares that if the canons against unchaste people administering ecclesiastical rites were enforced, no one would be left in the churches but the boys; and if he were to observe the canons against bastards, these also must be excluded. But these conditions of an ignorant age and a corrupt time are happily changed, and men of pure morals and holy lives have since occupied the places of those who corrupted the innocent, and outraged the holy office. People no longer insist that a priest, when a celibate, shall keep his mistress as a protection to the women of his parish.* With the destruction of ancient temples and

*See Lecky's "European Morals."

records, and the loss of the secret doctrine, materialism has steadily advanced. There being no life in the outer form, and the authority of the church being deprived of temporal power, all restraints are removed, and worse results are likely to follow.

If the secret wisdom could not be communicated to the ignorant and profane, even were the hierophant permitted so to do, if it could only be acquired by a life of study and self-denial, in other words, evolved from within, why, it may be asked, is all this secrecy? There being two interpretations, one for the priest, and one for the people, the priest also conforming to the outer requirement, but from quite different motives, to deny the sacredness or question the authority of the outer form, therefore led to irreligion and unbridled wickedness. The cable-tow was not released till man was bound by a stronger tie, viz., his own moral fortitude. The two interpretations were by no means antagonistic, though they were by no means equally comprehensive. Till, therefore, men were restrained by higher motives than fear and dread of punishment, they were to be held secure by the cable-tow.

The door of the inner temple was ever open to him who knocked in the right way, but the injunction was constantly given, cast not your pearls before swine, lest they be trampled in the mire, and the swine turn and rend you.

The hostility of the church to Freemasonry arises by no means, as generally supposed, from the fact that the oath of

secrecy interferes with the confessional, but rather from the fact that in the ancient land-marks, ritual, symbols, signs, and words of that ancient order, is to be found the most complete embodiment of the secret doctrine that has come down to modern times. While this ancient fraternity possesses no secret not perfectly familiar to the Jesuits, whose protean power is seen in more than one of its degrees, on the other hand, the Masons no longer possess the key to their own symbols, and cherish only a corpse from which the spirit long ago departed. Occasionally one wiser than his age may stumble on the key to the secret vault, of which so much is said and so little known, or, dissatisfied with the substitute for the master's word, he may seek the real word, which Swedenborg says is to be sought in farther Asia.

With this explanation, it becomes clear why the church hurls so many and such recent bulls at the Freemasons, viz., to bring them and all they possess into discredit with the faithful. It is only the fear of the black art in another form. If the body of Freemasons throughout the world only knew the priceless treasures they possess, knew how to unfold and use them, instead of fraternity and good-fellowship alone, they would recover the archaic wisdom of the ages.

And why, it may again be asked, if such disaster has followed the revelation of even the existence of the secret doctrine, should such revelation be made by any one? I answer, because at least a part of these results already exist. The au-

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thority of the church is already weakened even with the masses, and with the more intelligent to an extent well known, but not always admitted. The church itself is at best lukewarm; centuries of wrangling over creeds, and disputes as to jurisdiction, have done their work in spite of the dogma of infallibility on the one hand, and the Evangelical Alliance on the other, and irreligion and materialism are the result. Faith, as the evidence of things unseen, is cast aside, and demonstration demanded; nothing less will satisfy the spirit of the age. The power of the printing-press has made persecution practically impossible. The cry of infidel, and atheist, and social ostracism no longer hinders honest men and women from uttering their true convictions, and criticising the illogical and contradictory interpretations of ignorance. The fact that all Christian sects claim the bible as their authority shows the sorry pass to which these blind leaders of the blind have come. It is perfectly clear, to every person of intelligence, that either the record is false, or else that the spirit of the Lord has departed from the religions of the present day. On the other hand, the centralization of power and the systematic authority through Ecclesiasticism in the Catholic Church fail to show its patent of authority as did the prophets of Israel, if the records are to be believed, by signs and wonders, and which Christ predicted should follow them that believed. Read in the light of even this meager outline of the secret doctrine, the Book of Job, the Songs of Solomon,

the visions of St. John, the Book of Daniel, and the writings of Paul, the initiate, who declared that there is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body, and whether *in the body* or *out of the body* he knew not, but he saw things unlawful to utter. One need not long study the ruins of ancient grandeur, and of lost empire, to realize that civilization has again and again swept around the globe, and that the ancient Egyptian recited no fable when he spoke of the Lost Atlantics. In our sectarian pride and bigotry we imagine that we alone are floating on the highest tide of the evolution of the human race, children indeed of a new dispensation, and heirs of all the ages, *if we will so to be*. Unable to trace through outward forms the various religions of the world to any one fundamental conception, Rawlinson nevertheless declares* that the theory to which the facts appear on the whole to point, is the existence of a primitive religion, communicated to man from without, and he quotes Dollinger as to the manner in which the consciousness of Divinity became clouded and finally lost, under the overpowering sway of sense and lust. In these later times, when the fires of persecution have burned out, and when church and state no longer conspire to burn, torture, and destroy their Gallileos and Brunos, but seek other means of improving the human race than by destroying its choicest productions, now, as the trammels of creed, and the darkness of bigotry, are lifted from the minds and con-

* The Religions of the Ancient World, p. 92.

sciences of men, the full-orbed truth begins to dawn, shining still as of old, like the vestal flame on ancient altars, and dedicated to the unknown gods, ignorantly worshiped, and which Paul, the initiate, still declares to all who will listen, and who can understand. Materialistic science has effectually turned the tables during these last few decades, and the genius of religious creeds, and biblical interpretations in suppliant mood, has begged for its landmarks and its altars. Geology forced a new interpretation of the days of creation, which would have made the hatchet-faced old dyspeptic, John Calvin, kindle anew his arguments of fire for the glory of God! Evolution has steadily encroached upon the special creation hypothesis till the intelligence of the pulpit utterance may be measured by at least its cautious consideration of the subject.

If materialism may justly be urged, as a reproach to modern science, it is to her everlasting glory that she has not retaliated by persecution; perhaps the list is too long, and the result fearful to contemplate, if the account were balanced, and the actual worth to the world of the martyrs of science were taken into account, for it might have to contemplate the decimation of the human race. Evolution is not a theory, but a *law of nature*, a demonstration repeated in the unfolding of every seed which blossoms into flower and fruit, and every germ from monad to man, that throbs with life, suffers or enjoys, or is crowned with the fruit of understanding;

and while evolution is but one-half of the equation, involution of the Divine Idea, the essential form, being the other half, why do not those who claim to labor for the spiritual well-being of man, instead of hesitating, accept the interpretation thus far, and show its logical conclusion? If evolution has brought man to his present estate, by the same process, what may he not become, when his God-given attributes are unfolded on the spiritual plane. If, instead of trying to hide its past ignorance and apologizing for its false interpretations, the church would frankly drop them, and turn again to its sacred books and glorious traditions, she would be able to present a barrier to stay effectually the tide of materialism by unfolding the spiritual life of man. The time is fast approaching when she must do this or cease to be, for the knowledge will come from other sources, though the church struggles to the death. There is more in these ancient records, known as the old, and the new testaments, than a fetish, more and better than the Evangelical Alliance ever dreamed of, more than the shibboleth of rusty creeds ever knew, and it is coming to the world with the speed and energy of a new life. The knowledge it bears to man is of his own nature, ministry, and destiny. The Christ will indeed have risen, and will draw all men unto him; and if, as of old, his own receives him not, still, as of old, the common people will hear him gladly. It will heal the sick, by banishing the cause of most diseases; it will cast out devils, by unfolding the kingdom of heaven

within, and it will preach the gospel to the poor, though not to cushioned seats in costly churches. These were the signs of old, and they have never changed ; now, as then, the sanhedrim and the synagogue bar the way. There are many who sell the Lord for money, there is many a doubting Thomas, but the Pauls are few.

In conclusion, it is claimed that the core of all religions is the same ; that this core is also the secret doctrine of the ancient mysteries, whether Christian or pagan ; that the subject of both religion and mythology is Man ; that underlying all these varied forms of embodiment and expression, is one purpose, viz., to teach man his own nature, mission and destiny, and to assist him to unfold the God within him, as the highest and holiest worship of divinity ; that the powers possessed by, and said by Christ to follow as signs them that believe, are latent in man, and both natural and literal ; that mystery is only another name for ignorance, and miracle the name which the ignorant give to mystery ; that law and order obtain no less in the spiritual than the natural world, the laws of spirit being opposite, but not different or antagonistic from those of matter ; that as the most cultivated and refined specimen of humanity known to us at the present day, transcends the Bushman and the Hottentot, far more shall he whose latent powers and spiritual possibilities are fully unfolded, transcend our present knowledge or conception ; that to these latent powers belong the secret of clairvoyance,

and direct spiritual perception of truth, and power over material nature; that in every age there have lived those who knew these laws, and possessed these powers through strict conformity to the only method of their unfolding, through which alone such spiritual gifts become possible to man; that such men have been worshiped as gods, or murdered as magicians by the ignorant masses who could not understand them, and that the leaders in this shedding of blood have been priests of dominant religions, and finally for these reasons, that all records referring to such matters have been veiled in parable, myth, and allegory, one truth in numberless forms running through the countless ages, and known to the initiated as the Secret Doctrine.

This Brotherhood exists to-day as an epitome of the Brotherhood of Humanity. Its doors are open to all who desire to enter, but they may not desire like *roues*, sated with the lusts of the flesh and the deceitfulness of riches, with apathy and impotency. They must *desire* with the energy of youth, with the hot blood of an unflinching purpose, with the vivid imagination that can conceive of the fairness and beauty of Truth, with loyalty which admits no rival, and with a determination that will kill every rival passion within the soul for the possession of its empire